Religious communities in Russia delivered humanitarian aid to children in Donbas



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On December 22, 2022, humanitarian aid was delivered to the Lugansk People's Republic by the Interreligious Working Group for Defence of the Rights of the Faithful against Discrimination and Xenophobia under the Presidential Council for Cooperation with Religious Associations.

The Interreligious Working Group for the Defence of the Rights of Believers was formed in 2017 with a blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia as an Interreligious Working Group for Aid to the Syrian population. Its work is coordinated by the Chairman of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk. It is headed by Hieromonk Stephen (Igumnov), DECR secretary for inter-Christian relations.

The action was timed to the Interreligious Round Table, which took place on the same day in Lugansk. The round-table conference was attended by representatives of public, state and religious associations in Russia.

With a blessing of Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk, the round-table conference was addressed by the DECR secretary for the affairs of the diaspora, Archpriest Sergiy Zvonaryov, who came to Lugansk on December 22. On the same day, acting on behalf of the Working Group, he took part in the distribution of the humanitarian aid together with the vice-chairman of the Euro-Asian Division of the General Conference of the Seventh-Day Christians-Adventists, O. Yu. Goncharov and the Mufti of the Lugansk People's Republic, E. Gambarov.

The delegation of religious communities in Russia visited the orphanage for blind children in Lugansk "The Republican Education-Rehabilitation Center' and conveyed to its inmates a Braille printer, which embosses an ordinary computer text in braille onto paper, and twenty special kits for it. The participants in the action met with the centre's director Ms. N. A. Belousova, teachers and pupils, who were presented with New Year gifts.

Then the Working Group visited the Lutugino Region of the Lugansk People's Republic, where in the kindergarten 'The Golden Cockerel' they met with children and the head of the regional education administration, N. B. Romanyuk. A large lot of children's winter overcoats was brought to pupils of general education schools and pre-school children in the Lutugino Region. Archpriest Sergiy Zvonaryov and other members of the delegation gave children New Year gifts and school kits.

This project was implemented by the Working Group members including the Russian Orthodox Church, the Church of the Seventh-Day Christians-Adventists, the Central Muslim Board in Russia, the Muslim Board of the Republic of Tatarstan, the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Russia, the Novo-Nakhichevan Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church, the Buddhist Traditions Sangha, the Russian Union of Christians of Evangelical Faith (Pentecostal), the Russian Church of Christians of Evangelical Faith.

Valuable assistance in carrying out the action was rendered by the autonomous non-commercial organization for support of humanitarian programs 'Russian Humanitarian mission' and the Working Group's constant partner - Russian National Public Organizations of Veterans 'Combat Brotherhood'.

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